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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 5022
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 5053
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RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2793
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [UNGA](#) [KUNR](#) [IN](#) [AF](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: GOI RESPONSE POSITIVE TO UN DEMOCRACY FUND
INVITATION

REF: A. STATE 65746

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 2501

Classified By: DCM Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[11.](#) (C) In a May 2 meeting with PolCouns and Poloff, MEA Joint Secretary (United Nations/Political) Sanjiv Arora said that the GOI plans actively to promote the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF, Ref A) to Indian NGOs and civil society organizations, including via the MEA's Internet site, and to facilitate these groups' applications to the Fund. He did not rule out a future direct role for the GOI in conducting UNDEF projects, but said that such participation was not likely in the near-term. Arora also left open the possibility of supporting appropriate international NGOs on projects that dovetailed with New Delhi's democracy-promotion philosophy.

[12.](#) (C) In response to PolCouns' suggestion that India take the lead in replicating its Afghanistan program of democracy promotion/training in Central Asia, notably in Kyrgyzstan -- following up on A/S Boucher's conversations with the MEA (Ref B) -- Arora replied that, for the time being, the GOI would be more likely to support and possibly join a UNDEF-funded project under an NGO's leadership. He emphasized that the first step would be for the Kyrgyz to request such assistance. Asked about empowering a quasi-governmental NGO like the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation to conduct such projects, Arora recounted that this idea had been examined in the run-up to President Bush's visit, and had not found political support within the GOI.

International Center for Democratic Transition

[13.](#) (C) Asked about the status of India's participation in the International Center for Democratic Transition (ICDT) in

Budapest, Arora reported that the GOI fully supports the concept and "now is the time for specifics." He added that India's Ambassador to Hungary Ranjit Rae should soon be notified to the ICDT as India's representative once the last GOI bureaucratic boxes have been checked off. In the meantime, Rae has been fielding ICDT suggestions for projects where India might play a role, for instance on Haiti.

Comment/Action Request: India Invested

¶4. (C) Arora's engagement demonstrates New Delhi's strong sense of ownership in the UNDEF and its interest in capitalizing on India's founding role. He was fully current on UNDEF planning and discussions in New York. Arora (and the Foreign Ministry) clearly see the UNDEF as a key element in UN reform writ large, and their interest in replicating their Afghanistan precedent is evident.

¶5. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Arora will be in Washington May 10-12 for the Peacekeeping Joint Working Group, and expressed interest in meetings with DRL, G, or IO, following up on his past conversations with U/S Dobriansky on operationalizing the UNDEF. Please keep Post informed as his schedule firms up.

¶6. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)

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